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INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-15 CIAE-00 H-02 NSCE-00  
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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1781

INFO DIA WASHINGTON DC//IR

AMEMBASSY LISBON

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN GER

USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GER

USDOCSOUTH NAPLES IT

RUFLFSA/16THAF TORREJON SP

COMNAVACT ROTA SP

AMCONSUL BARCELONA POUCH

AMCONSUL BILBAO POUCH

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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USCINCEUR FOR POLAD; USDOCSOUTH FOR INTAF; CINCUSAFE FOR  
POLAD

E.O. 12065: GDS 2/6/87 (MYERS, ROBERT P) OR-P

TAGS: MPOL, PINT, SP

SUBJECT: RIGHTIST PAPER PUBLISHES THINLY DISGUISED CALL  
- FOR MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS

1. (LOU) SUMMARY: A GROUP OF MILITARY OFFICERS ARE  
ALLEGEDLY BEHIND THREE ARTICLES WHICH HAVE APPEARED  
IN THE PAST SIX WEEKS IN THE ULTRA-RIGHT MADRID DAILY  
EL ALCAZAR. WRITTEN UNDER THE PSEUDONYM ALMENDROS  
(ALMOND TREES), THE THREE ARTICLES ARE INCREASINGLY  
OUTSPOKEN IN THEIR DEMAND FOR MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

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IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. THE THIRD ARTICLE,  
PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 1 AFTER SUAREZ' RESIGNATION,  
STATES BOLDLY THAT IF A COALITION GOVERNMENT IS  
FORMED "IN A SHORT TIME THE OPPORTUNITY WILL COME FOR  
THE LEGITIMATE INTERVENTION OF THE ARMED FORCES."  
THE GROUP THUS FAR HAS NOT BEEN VIEWED AS A SERIOUS  
THREAT BUT IS UNDER INVESTIGATION, AND THE AUTHORS  
WHEN DISCOVERED MAY BE SUBJECTED TO PUNISHMENT UNDER  
MILITARY OR CIVILIAN LAW. END SUMMARY.

2. (LOU) THE FIRST ARTICLE PUBLISHED DECEMBER 17  
CONFINED ITSELF MOSTLY TO MILITARY MATTERS, FINDING  
CONSPIRACY AND DARK OMENS IN THE ABSENCE OF MANY

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MILITARY OFFICERS FROM THE CHRISTMAS DRINK TRADITIONALLY OFFERED BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ESCUELA DE ESTADO MAYOR, THE SPANISH ARMY'S EQUIVALENT OF THE U.S. ARMY STAFF COLLEGE. THE ARTICLE ALSO NOTED THAT A DINNER ARRANGED BY LEFTIST OFFICERS ON THE SAME DATE HAD LOW ATTENDANCE. FROM THESE TWO HAPPENINGS, THE ARTICLE DREW A PICTURE OF A MILITARY FED UP WITH POLITICIANS AND DEMORALIZED BY POOR LEADERSHIP ON THE PART OF BOTH VICE PRIME MINISTER FOR SECURITY AFFAIRS GUITIERREZ MELLADO AND DEFENSE MINISTER SAHAGUN. ALTHOUGH THE ARTICLE COMPLAINED THAT THE POLITICIANS WERE TRYING TO WEAKEN THE LINKS BETWEEN THE KING AND THE MILITARY, IT DID NOT ADVOCATE SPECIFIC ACTION EXCEPT THAT THE NEXT GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE THE "MORAL AUTHORITY" TO GAIN THE RESPECT OF THOSE IN THE MILITARY WHO WANT TO EXERCISE THEIR PROFESSION WITH HONOR AND DISCIPLINE.

3. (LOU) THE SECOND "ALMENDROS" ARTICLE PUBLISHED JANUARY 22 ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT FRONTALLY AND MORE

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CLEARLY DISPLAYED THE UNDEMOCRATIC CREDENTIALS OF ITS AUTHORS. IT FAULTED THE GOVERNMENT FOR A DISASTROUS POLICY ON AUTONOMOUS REGIONS WHICH THREATENED TO DESTROY THE UNITY OF SPAIN AND BLAMED THE RULING POLITICIANS FOR WRECKING THE SPANISH ECONOMY. THE ARTICLE CLAIMED THE CONSTITUTION NOT ONLY DID NOT WORK BUT ALSO MADE THE COUNTRY UNGOVERNABLE. THE CONSTITUTION, THE AUTHORS CHARGED, MUST BE CHANGED. MINISTER OF DEFENSE SAHAGUN WAS RIDICULED FOR HIS OPTIMISM IN THE FACE OF THE DETERIORATION OF SPAIN. THE ARTICLE CITED WITH APPROVAL A QUOTATION FROM SIMON BOLIVAR THAT "A CONGRESS HAS NEVER SAVED A REPUBLIC." "THIS MAY BE THE TIME," THE ARTICLE CONCLUDED, "NOT TO APPEAL TO CONGRESSES, PARTIES, AND GOVERNMENT ... BUT TO THE REMAINING INSTITUTIONS OF THE STATE."

4. (LOU) THE MOST RECENT "ALMENDROS" ARTICLE ON FEBRUARY 1 ANNOUNCED THAT THE "POINT OF NO RETURN" HAD BEEN REACHED. SEPARATISTS IN THE AUTONOMOUS REGIONS, THE AUTHORS CLAIMED, HAD DESIGNED THE RECENT LULL IN TERRORISM MERELY AS A PAUSE BEFORE LEAPING FORWARD TOWARD SECESSION. THE KING AND THE ARMED FORCES, IT CLAIMED, MUST TAKE THE LEAD, BUT IT DESCRIBED THE ACTIONS OF THE KING IN FORMING A NEW GOVERNMENT AS PATHETIC BECAUSE HE WAS SO CIRCUMSCRIBED BY THE CONSTITUTION. THE KING HAD AN OPPORTUNITY INSTEAD, THE AUTHORS SAID, TO FORM A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL RECUPERATION SUPPORTED BY LOYAL INSTITUTIONS, I.E. THE ARMED FORCES, NOT BY THE POLITICIANS. THE ARTICLE ONCE AGAIN CALLED FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM AND DEMANDED THAT A BRAKE BE APPLIED TO DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL AUTONOMIES. THE KING, THE ARTICLE CONCLUDED,

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HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE ACTION.

5. (LOU) AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF THE LAST ARTICLE,

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THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY HAS FORMALLY ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE IF CURRENT LAWS HAVE BEEN BROKEN BY PUBLICATION OF THE ARTICLE AND WHETHER LEGAL ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN.

6. (C) COMMENT: MUCH HAS BEEN MADE OF THE FACT THAT ALMOND TREES BLOOM IN MID-TO-LATE FEBRUARY (AND THIS YEAR ARE ALREADY IN BLOOM IN ALICANTE), AND THAT THE ARTICLES THEREFORE WERE A SIX-WEEK CAMPAIGN TO RALLY SUPPORT BY LATE FEBRUARY FOR INTERVENTION BY THE ARMED FORCES AND FOR FIRMER -- AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL -- ACTION BY THE KING. THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION AS WELL THAT THE PSEUDONYM IS

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AN ANAGRAM FORMED BY THE INITIALS OF THE AUTHORS AND HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH TIMING. IN ANY EVENT IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT THE KING WOULD MAKE ANY MOVE OUTSIDE THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CONSTITUTION, AND THE INVESTIGATIONS WITHIN THE MILITARY ARE LIKELY TO KEEP "ALMENDROS" FROM BLOSSOMING THIS SPRING. NEVERTHELESS IF THE ARTICLES WERE WRITTEN BY MILITARY PERSONNEL, THEY ARE SIGNIFICANT SINCE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT ANY ELEMENT IN THE MILITARY HAS PUBLICLY AND UNMISTAKABLY CALLED FOR WHAT WOULD BE, IN EFFECT, A PALACE COUP.

7. (C) NO ONE YET KNOWS IF "ALMENDROS" IS COMPOSED OF A TINY BAND OF MALCONTENTS OR A LARGER GROUP. AMONG OUR MILITARY CONTACTS THE DISCONTENT EXPRESSED IN THE ARTICLES SOMETIMES HITS A RESPONSIVE CHORD BUT THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS OF ANY SUPPORT FOR THE CALL TO MILITARY INTERVENTION.  
TODMAN

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